

REMARKS

In view of the above amendments and following remarks, reconsideration of the rejections contained in the Office Action of June 2, 2008 is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 9-13 as being unpatentable over Tepman et al. in view of Pickering et al. However, the Examiner also went on to indicate that claims 14-21 would be allowable if they were rewritten into independent form.

Accordingly, while Applicants do not necessarily agree with the position taken by the Examiner with respect to the applicability of the prior art to the claims, Applicants have nonetheless decided to accept the allowable subject matter at this time. As such, claims 9-13 have been canceled, and claim 14 has been amended to include the subject matter of claims 9 and 13. Accordingly, claim 14, along with dependent claims 15-21, should now clearly be in condition for allowance. Indication of such is respectfully requested. The Examiner's attention is further directed to the accompanying Information Disclosure Statement submitting four English language abstracts of Japanese documents.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and the Examiner is requested to pass the case to issue. If the Examiner should have any comments or suggestions to help speed the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned representative.

Respectfully submitted,

Seiji KATSUOKA et al.

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